

Shellfish Department
March 2017
Monthly Report

This month has been rather eventful in our fishery. A very large basking shark has stranded in the herring river has concerned town officials and change the mechanism for opening conditionally approved areas. The result is that this year we must delay the Herring River opening two weeks in order to secure approval from the Board of Selectmen. While this delayed opening is a hardship for some fisherman the recent rather dramatic, prolonged cold snap has certainly stressed the oysters to the point that a concentration of fishermen walking on the shellfish would very likely result in significant seed mortality. Seeking select board approval prior to D.M.F water quality and approval will now be a standard procedure for the W.S.D

In other matters W.S.D is being generally more aggressive on enforcement issues. We have implemented a reasonably random total catch inspection system. We are very pleased that our fishermen our being very responsible with their gauges. Also the changes in our sub-legal or petite oyster regulations will challenge our department. We did issue one written warning for a variety of wet storage and tagging violations.

Another rather positive development is that we have had very good success securing late grant reports. This is generally a yearly problem, and we are developing procedures to further improve this process.

On the propagation front we are mildly concerned about the supply of whole surf clam shell for our cultch program. Phone calls are being made in order to secure our precious cultch. Also, meetings are being attended and plans are being made in order to address the recent regulatory challenges to our cultch and remote setting practices.

Repectfully submitted

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